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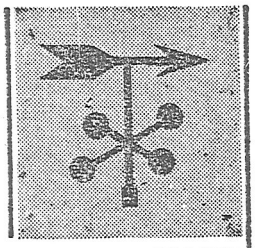
Judge Promises Berrigan Sentence During September

By Herald Wire Services

HARRISBURG, Pa — A federal judge Tuesday promised to sentence the Rev. Philip Berrigan in September, ending a five-month delay in the closing of the "Harrisburg Seven" case.

The Roman Catholic priest and Sister Elizabeth McAlister, a New York City nun, were convicted last April of illegally smuggling letters in and out of prison. Trial Judge R. Dixon Herman has been deliberating post-trial motions since that time.



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Berrigan's brother, the Rev. Daniel Berrigan, fasting here to protest the delay, said Herman had promised a defense attorney he would sentence Philip in September.

"We had asked for sentencing by Sept. 1 so Philip could go before the parole board later in the month but the judge refused," Daniel said. "He claimed the docket was full. But we really believe he is under political pressure to keep Phil in prison."

The two brothers were convicted of destroying draft records in Maryland in 1968. Daniel was parolled last February, but Philip's request was denied pending the outcome of the Harrisburg Seven trial.

"Philip has been eligible for parole for 12 months, but nothing can be done until the judge sentences him," Daniel said. "He just keeps pushing it further and further back."

Daniel and a third brother, Jerome, began a fast and vigil Monday, promising to stay outside the federal building during daylight hours until Herman sets a definite sentence date. They are on a diet of water and fruit juices.